16: Great Britain Admiralty -- 168 [2] G-3 (no date) 1920 Yakut
116, 165, 583, 595, 854

"The marriage ceremony contains an exchange of gifts, the bridegroom brings kalym, the bride anna (dowry). When the Cossacks came, they found polygamy general, owing no doubt to the nomadic character of the people, the Yakut having a wife in every pasture; but this is not much practiced now, partly because the high price of the kalym is a deterrent, partly because girls die more frequently than boys in infancy, as they are not so carefully tended."

24: Wrangell--165-166 G-3 (1820-23) 1842 Yakut -1-2
116, 165, 173, 178, 212, 577

"I made several excursions on foot to different albuty, twenty or thirty wersts off. In one of them, called Sul'gi Etar (horse pasture), I met with a Jakut eighty-two years of age, named after Lieutenant Laptew, who visited the Kolyma in 1739. He had married a Russian woman, and could not only speak Russian fluently, but also read and wrote it with ease. In spite of his great age, he was so healthy and vigorous that he used to ride long distances with the young men, drive the cattle to and from their pasture, and take his share in most of the country occupations. He was very fond of tea and of punch, which are very expensive luxuries in this place. I passed many agreeable hours with this unusually intelligent Jakut. He complained of the ignorance of his countrymen, who, he said, had been formerly more civilized; and that, before they separated from the other Tartar races to which they are allied, they had possessed written characters, and, consequently, means of intellectual cultivation [166] which they have since lost. He asserted that his tribe had once inhabited far distant southern regions, and in proof of it he quoted several popular sayings, in which gold and gems, lions and tigers, are mentioned, of which they are now entirely ignorant. He was unable to speak more definitely concerning their earlier condition and country, as such accounts have only been handed down by traditions, which have been in great measure lost since Schamanism has yielded to Christianity. He said that litigiousness, dishonesty, and deceit had increased, and complained particularly that the immoderate use of spirituous liquors (of which, by-the-way, he was rather fond himself) had caused such a physical

deterioration in the race, that no one now attained to the age of a hundred years and upward, as was often the case in his father's time. He talked much of the severity of the climate, the frequent failure of the hay-harvest, and the ravages of wolves. I will here recount all that I could collect from his narrations and from conversation with his countrymen concerning their earliest history."

the Yakut system of kinship is close to the systems used by a number of Turkic peoples. 601

The position of women both in the family and in public life was inferior. The husband, the head of the family, enjoyed despotic power, and the wife could not even complain of harsh treatment, which was a fairly common occurrence, if not at the hands of the husband, then at the hands of his relatives. A woman from another tribe, defenseless and lacking in all rights, was burdened with hard work when she became part of a new family. 562

The position of older people who were decrepit and no longer able to work was also difficult. Little care was shown for them, they were given little to eat and poorly clothed, sometimes even reduced to complete destitution. 888

The position of children, despite the fact that the Yakuts loved their children, as pointed out by many observers, was also rather unfortunate. The birth rate was very high among the Yakuts and most families produced from 5 to 10 children, sometimes as many as 20 or even more. However, the bad living conditions, poor food and inattention resulted in very high child mortality. Apart from their own children, many families, particularly those in which there were few children, often adopted children, whom they often simply bought from the poorer people. 853 [163] [165] 577

Newborn babies were washed by the fire in the hearth and rubbed with cream. This operation was repeated fairly frequently later on. The mother breast-fed her child for some time, as long as 4 or 5 years, although in addition the child received a horn of cow's milk. The Yakut cradle was a long box made of thin, bent pieces of wood, in which the wrapped baby was placed, strapped in and left for some time, without being removed. The cradle had a groove to drain away the urine. Older children usually crawled about the earthen floor together with the animals, either half-naked or completely naked, and were left to themselves; sometimes they were attached to the table on a long strap to prevent them from falling into the fire. The children of the poorer people were trained to work from an early age, and had to carry out work according to their strength—such as collecting brush in the forest, looking after smaller livestock, and so on; the girls were trained in domestic duties. The children of the toyons received more attention, were mollycoddled and generally spoiled. 854 [853] 855 184

The children had few toys. These were usually wooden figures of animals, tiny bows and arrows, little houses and model utensils, made by the parents or sometimes by the children themselves; and the girls had dolls with model clothes, blankets, pillows and so on. The games of the Yakut children were simple and rather monotonous. The absence of noisy group games is characteristic; generally speaking, when the children of the poorer Yakuts grew up, they were quiet and sluggish. 524

Religion

Even in the second half of the 18th century, many of the Yakuts had been baptized, and in the 19th century all Yakuts were registered as Orthodox. Although the transition to Orthodoxy was motivated by and large by material considerations (various privileges and grants for those baptized), the new religion gradually became part of their everyday life. In the corner of their dwellings there hung icons; the people wore crucifixes (the large silver crucifix-type embellishments worn by the women are interesting), went to church and many of them, particularly 771